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P 012003Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6491
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3554
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 0089
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0046

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 000267

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/01/2016
TAGS: PREL UNSC GT VE UN TD
SUBJECT: T&T FM AMENABLE TO SC MEMBERSHIP FOR GUATEMALA

REF: STATE 27055

Classified By: POL: ARABBY FOR 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Ambassador called on Trinidad & Tobago (T&T) Foreign Minister Knowlson Gift, on March 1, to present him with Reftel talking points regarding Guatemala,s and Venezuela,s competing candidacies for election to the UN Security Council. The Ambassador began by acknowledging T&T,s own recent expression of interest in a UN Security Council seat at some point in the future, and noted that the US would be most willing to discuss a T&T candidacy at the appropriate time. He said the purpose of his call was to secure T&T support for the more immediate goal of helping Guatemala defeat Venezuela in the upcoming election for the 2007-8 non-permanent Latin American seat on the Council.

¶2. (C) Gift noted that Guatemala had already sounded out T&T and the members of CARICOM on their stance with respect to its and Venezuela,s candidacies. He recognized that the US must play a behind-the-scenes role in its support for Guatemala so as not to convey the impression that Guatemala is the "US candidate". He also pointed out that Guatemala had presented its candidacy cautiously, not wishing to make an enemy of Venezuela unnecessarily.

¶3. (C) However, Gift himself was openly supportive of Guatemala,s candidacy for the Security Council and decidedly cool to Venezuela,s potential Council membership. He said the fact that Guatemala, a founding member of the UN, had never held a Security Council seat was perhaps the strongest point in its favor. In addition, he said he himself had witnessed first hand Venezuela,s disruptive behavior at the November 2005 Summit of the Americas meeting in Argentina and at the September 2005 world summit at the UN in New York. Comparing Guatemala,s and Venezuela,s qualifications, Gift said it seemed that Guatemala had &a good case8.

¶4. (C) Gift concluded by thinking aloud about a possible strategy for gathering support for Guatemala. He said he would consult with his CARICOM counterparts and would make sure Guatemala is kept apprised of his progress. The Ambassador urged him to have Prime Minister Patrick Manning push his counterparts, too, to support Guatemala,s candidacy.

AUSTIN